

# THE POCAHONTAS TIMES

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CALVIN W. PRICE, EDITOR.

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The battle of Elkwater was the Civil War battle that was never fought. There was some slaughter but both sides drew back without going on with the great conflict that was staged. Both sides were on the defensive. The federal forces were dug in in Tygarts Valley, Randolph county, below the mouth of the considerable creek called Elkwater, for the purpose of holding the confederates from marching into the northwestern part of West Virginia, and the confederates were entrenched on Middle Mountain to hold the federal army from marching through Marlinton, Huntersville, and Warm Springs, and taking possession of the Virginia Central Railroad at Milltown. That is the reason that both sides were content to face each

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Robert E. Lee to the end of the war shone more as a defensive strategist than he did in his offensive movements. In this he was the antithesis of Stonewall Jackson who came down on them like a wolf in the fold. Note Lee's failure in the Gettysburg campaign.

The federal forces were flushed with the victories of Philippi, Rich Mountain and Carrick's Ford. McClellan had won these and it made him commander in chief, so he went to Washington to take charge of the far flung battlelines, and left General Reynolds to make a fortified camp at Elkwater, while General Rosecrans

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Mountain and Carrick's Ford. McClellan had won these and it made him commander in chief, so he went to Washington to take charge of the far flung battlelines, and left General Reynolds to make a fortified camp at Elkwater, while General Rosecrans marched on to Kanawha.

The road from Marlinton to Elkwater, now called the Seneca Trail is almost due north and south. From Marlinton it is more or less up hill for seven miles until it tops Elk Mountain. Then it descends a short distance to the upper waters of Elk River and follows the Old Field Fork down for about nine miles to the forks, crossing Slaty Fork near its mouth, there to the Big Spring of Elk Fork. The pike follows this stream. to the postoffice Linwood, four miles, and then continues north ascending Middle Mountain two miles, then across a head of a hollow about a mile to the top of Valley Mountain, the line between Randolph County and Pocahontas County, and thence about ten miles to the Elkwater fort. It was an important pike at the beginning of the Civil War, being one of the Commonwealth's highways, under the Internal Improvement scheme that Virginia had engaged in so heavily for thirty-odd years

purpose.

And about the same time the tender was a bushwhacked on July 19, 1861. I wrote to him and he recruited a company of one hundred men that as a result he had a number of their men might reach eighty men in the course of the enemy's

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It was an important pike at the beginning at the Civil War, being one of the Commonwealth's highways, under the internal improvement schemes that Virginia had engaged in so heavily for thirty-odd years immediately prior to the war.

The country is, and was at that time nearly all cleared and the road lined with fine farms between Marlinton and Elkwater.

The union army had won signal victories in Randolph and Tucker counties July 11, 12, and 13, 1861, and the news had just time to spread over the nation for a general rejoicing, when on July 21st, the confederates won a big battle at Bull Run and convinced the north that there was serious trouble ahead.

McClelland was ordered to leave some one in command in the mountains and get the war going again.

He arranged to hold the confederates back. The immense size of the ditch and bank at Elkwater is still to be noticed. So it is not surprising to find an order to the effect that this was to be an extra big barrier, as well as the one on Cheat mountain.

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Keynolds made the fort at Elkwater, and Kimball of the Fourteenth Indiana regiment, made the one at Cheat Summit generally referred to as White Top, where a man by the name of White lived. The Cheat Summit camp was on the Staunton & Parkersburg turnpike and this road ran south east from Huttons.

Reynolds made the fort at Elkwater, and Kimball of the Fourteenth Indiana regiment, made the one at Cheat Summit generally referred to as White Top, where a man by the name of White lived. The Cheat Summit camp was on the Staunton & Parkersburg turnpike and this road ran south east from Huttonsville, gradually leaving the pike from that place to Marlinton. Cheat Summit is almost due east from Elkwater where the camp was and a trail led down the mountain making a short cut seven miles long between the two places. The wagon roads around by Huttonsville between the camps covered a distance of eighteen miles.

These camps were formed on or about the 13th or 14th of July. The first troops of the confederates to arrive at Middle Mountain were the Bath Cavalry on July 28th, followed by Col. Stephen Lee, with the Sixth North Carolina regiment. The plan of fortifying Valley Mountain and Middle Mountain was the result of a report made by William Skeen, an attorney of Huntersville, who furnished a map of the country, and

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In the meantime troops had been pouring into Staunton from all over the south and had been routed by way of Monterey on the Staunton and Parkersburg pike. The information furnished by Skeen was seized upon immediately by Robert E. Lee at Richmond, and he had a good deal of trouble getting the officers at Staunton to cease to send troops by Monterey and to detrain them at Millboro.

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terey, Bartow, Huntersville, and Marlinton, were called the North-western Army, and General Loring was placed in command of this army by an order from General Lee dated July 20th. This was the officer who had outranked Robert E. Lee but who took his orders from Lee. But it was not long until Lee himself came to the mountains and took over the command. He arrived at Valley Mountain August 8th, and from that time to September 14th, that was Headquarters of the Forces, that title traveling with Lee from Richmond to the Big Spring.

Here is a list of the headquarters in West Virginia during the wet summer of 1861. Lee was at Valley Mountain from August 8 to August 16, at Meadow Bluff on September 24, and at Sewell Mountain, on October 20. During 1861, all of Robert E. Lee's activities in camp were conducted in West Virginia, the rest of the time being spent at Richmond.

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At Clarksburg was another West  
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advise the war department from the  
federal side. John S. Carlile, on Au-  
gust 15, 1861, wrote to Simeon Cam-  
eron, secretary of war, for God's  
sake to send more troops and a gen-  
eral to command them or they would  
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on the northwest by Mingo Flats,  
and that the Mingo Flats road was  
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And about this time another defender was brought to light. It was a bushwhacker. By a letter dated July 19, 1861, General H. R. Jackson wrote to headquarters that he had recruited home guards to the number of one hundred and eighty men, and that as all of them had corn to work, he had agreed that if they left eighty of their best riflemen that the rest might return to their crops. These eighty riflemen were familiar with the country and were to "annoy the enemy from the hills and bushes."

So the mountain armies filled the passes and watched each other during the weeks of August and the first part of September. In the federal camp at Elkwater were two companies from Indiana who were in gray

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A few weeks ago, I had a chapter on the way the confederate forces got lost in the Cheat River jungles about Cheat Bridge and thereby prevented Lee from having a pitched battle at Elkwater. These troops were from the army at Bartow and they were to pass through the laurel and the hobblerod in the night time to the south of the camp at Cheat Summit and that after much suffering and many hardships they came straggling back, defeated, weary and discouraged. In studying the evidence that is left of the Elkwater affair, I have found out something more about that lost legion. They attempted to go through the wilderness on the night of the 11th of September. None of the pickets or sentinels of the federal camp on the mountain knew that any such movement was taking place.

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top the mountain on the pike. And  
early in the morning there were parts  
of three regiments which had passed  
by the camp and gotten to the pike  
in the rear, for early that morning,  
the 12th, three army wagons started  
from Cheat Summit for supplies, and  
they rolled into the confederate army  
about a mile west of the encampment  
and were captured. The number of  
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From this time on the skirmishing in the big forests of Cheat assumed the character of Indian fighting. Later in the day a company of Indiana troops caught sight of some confederates four miles west of the camp at the summit and had a battle with them, the federal troops remaining in the road and the confederates disappearing in the timber.

It now appears that these Indiana troops had been camped in the dense spruce for full two months and the active young soldiers had nothing better to do than to become thoroughly acquainted with the wonders of such a wilderness. Few of them had ever seen a mountain or a forest of any great extent before. They had

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It now appears that these Indiana troops had been camped in the dense spruce for full two months and the active young soldiers had nothing better to do than to become thoroughly acquainted with the wonders of such a wilderness. Few of them had ever seen a mountain or a forest of any great extent before. They had roamed in the mountains hunting and fishing and having as good a time as they could under the circumstances, and in the battle in the woods they had the soldiers who had come from Arkansas and other southern states at a great disadvantage. The object of the confederate flanking movement was to get in behind the Summit camp and take another

and place which was a small camp and North- Supply point known as Cheat Mountain Loring Pass ten miles west of the summit at the northern base of Cheat Mountain, and the skirmish in the afternoon of the 12th, interfered with this movement.

But On the 12th the big army on Valley Mountain moved forward. About half way between the Valley Mountain camp and Elkwater fort, is the town of Valley Head. This is the point that the Webster county road, the Point Mountain pike, joins the Seneca Trail and the federal forces had been maintaining an advance guard at that point.

The confederate army at this point was about nine thousand strong, and after a battle at the forks of the road at Valley Head, the federals fell back and the confederates did not advance. Along the road which follows the river bottom the land was cleared, but between that strip of settled country and the great Cheat Mountain there is a great stretch of broken wooded country through which many streams flow down from Cheat mountain to the Valley.

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Not if this wondered that his proud regiment up the broad valley, with flags flying, to take to while he millions down the federal works into the corner.

It is no wonder Washington of Elkwater would get around the see the confederates ing up the river tack. And army that he nearer and nearer that he could search, until shot and killed.

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General Reynolds found by night fall on the 12th, that he was in a precarious position. Both roads to the Summit camp were in possession of the enemy. The wagon train had been captured, and his own wagon train loaded for supplies for the Summit camp and which were badly needed, had no chance to get through.

So about three in the morning of Friday the Thirteenth, he sent one army to open up the wagon road, and another army to open the bridle path.

As a matter of fact, it would seem that the Confederates had about 1000 men in the woods.

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Learning that a whip chase was underway to the west and that the confederates were working out towards the Greenbrier River, with the intention of driving them, the commander at the Summit sent some companies of soldiers east over the pike and had them line the Cheat River

confederates were working out towards the Greenbrier River, with the ~~Indian~~ boys driving them, the commander at the Summit sent some companies of soldiers east over the pike and had them line Cheat River above the bridge, and a battle was fought on that river about two miles above that bridge at a point near where the Cheat Mountain Clubhouse now stands.

The confederate reports are missing as to this encounter, but the federal reports are very positive. They are sure that all the regiments, both from Valley Mountain and from Camp Bartow had been rounded up and were being driven toward the Greenbrier, and that when they were stopped by three hundred men at some point on the river near the clubhouse, that the confederates numbered fifty-five hundred men. These men were driven back into the wilderness and it was not until about ten o'clock that night that they got

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back to Camp Bartow. Kimball says that the result of the panic in the confederate ranks was that the woods were literally covered with the baggage, coats, haversacks, and other articles abandoned by the enemy.

Not if this is true, it is not to be wondered that Lee looked in vain for his proud regiments to come stepping up the broad fields of Tygart's Valley, with flags flying, and drums beating, to take the federals in the rear, while he marched his victorious legions down the valley to storm the federal works and take West Virginia into the confederacy.

It is no wonder that Col. John A. Washington rode down by the mouth of Elkwater with a squad of men, to get around the bend so that he could see the confederate columns advancing up the river to support the attack. And that not seeing such an army that he should have ventured nearer and nearer the fortification so that he could make a thorough search, until so close that he was shot and killed.

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Col. Rust was ordered out of Cheat mountain with his command to get to Bartow as soon as he could and send a dispatch to General Loring by the "near way", Loring was no doubt that day at Valley Mountain. "Get Mr. Arbogast to take the dispatch, if possible." Probably J. H. Arbogast, whose plantation was on the site of the town of Durbin. He is described as the postmaster.

In the meantime on Friday, the Thirteenth, Lee's army edged down the stream from Valley Head, to a point as low down as the mouth of some miles above the Elk.

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Thirteenth, Lee's army edged down  
the stream from Valley Head, to a  
point as low down as the mouth of  
Elkwater some miles above the Elk-  
water fort. They did not give battle,  
waiting no doubt for the flanking  
army that never came, but the feder-  
als had a rifled gun that shot a ten  
pound ball that they ran out about  
three quarters of a mile, and fired a  
few rounds at the confederates who  
withdrew a short distance. That  
confederate army lay about the  
mouth of Elkwater creek all day on  
the 13th, and on the 14th they were  
still there. Reynolds said that on  
the 14th that another confederate  
force was chased by the Summit  
camp. And that on the 15th there  
was a confederate army on top

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still there. Reynolds said that on  
the 14th that another confederate  
force was chased by the Summit  
camp. And that on the 15th there  
was another confederate army on top  
of Cheat on the pike that was driven  
back.

Anyway in the afternoon of the  
14th the confederates went back to  
their camp on Valley Mountain and  
Middle Mountain. So Lee's orders  
to advance dated September 9, 1886,  
were in force until September 14,  
when Lee called them back and said  
goodby.

Farm for Sale

194 acres of land